

# "I AM GUILTY." ===== "HE IS INNOCENT."

*"I Went to Prison to Serve My Husband's Sentence Because I Loved Him and I Would Do It Again."*

MARY KENNY

MARY KENNY, plain-featured, stoop-shouldered and a household drudge, is a heroine. In 1887 a man was arrested for robbing a flat in West Nineteenth street.

The missing goods consisted of a lot of silverware.

The man's name was William Kenny.

A weeping girl wife clung to him as he was led away to a prison cell.

"You shan't be sent away, Bill," she said.

When he was led into the Court of Special Sessions to plead to the indictment, a woman stepped forward and cried in a choking voice:

"I am the thief. I stole it."

Nothing could change her.

She kept steadfastly to her statement.

She repeated over and over, "I am guilty."

The man was set free.

"Yes, she did it," he said.

Mary Kenny, the delicate wife, received a sentence.

She was sent to the penitentiary for six months.

When the heavy door of the prison van swung to and the driver took the commitments in his hands and the weary journey began, Bill called to his wife: "Good-by, Mary; you're all right. I'll stick by you."

At the expiration of six months Bill's wife was released. He treated her with incessant brutality.

Finally, after the passing of twelve years, she could endure his abuse no longer.

A week ago, in sheer self-defence, she had her husband committed to prison for sixty days.

## WHY I TOOK BILL'S PLACE IN JAIL.

By Mary Kenny.

THERE is nothing much to tell. I loved him. Isn't it that that makes all women go wrong?

When I met him first I was happy for the only time in my life.

I was a slip of a girl then. I wore my hair hanging down my back.

My skirts were to my shoe tops.

I was living in Babylon, Long Island.

Like all girls, I had dreams of a happy home some day with a good, steady man for a husband.

I had dreams of children who'd grow to love me and care for me in my old age.

I dreamed, too, of a lover.

Then one day I met Bill.

He was the only man who ever made love to me.

He said we must keep company together, and we did. He asked me to be his wife, and soon we came to New York and were married.

A priest performed the ceremony. I forget his name. It was in a Roman Catholic church.

That's our religion. We are Irish-American.

I loved him then, and I love him still.

I loved him then, and I do now. But if he's out again in three months and I hear of his being untrue to me—he'll be back again this time for a year. I can't stand that.

I see and know only sordid drudgery. My life is always spent as a menial in some one's kitchen. Sometimes I feel the women for whom I work are my inferiors. I am not illiterate. I went to a good public school, and can read, write and figure fairly well. The years I've spent drudging away at pots and pans have left my brains leisure to think out many things. I'm awfully afraid I'll lose my place, but I so want to tell the truth.

It was just love.

When I was first sent up my only consolation was that Bill's last words to me were: "You're a good girl, Mary."

When I took the long ride my nerves were tortured by every revolution of a car wheel.

Oh, the disgrace, the shame!

Every one believes I am a common thief! Later I found a certain consolation in feeling no one can see me here. I'm

## A REMARKABLE NEW YORK NEWS STORY OF A SACRIFICE FOR LOVE.

and I felt clothed in a flaming garment of shame as soon as I put it on me. The rough material hurt my flesh, but my heart hurt me worse.

For several days you're allowed to be in your cell. This is to give you time to rally and brace up to meet the hundreds of other 'numbers' you'll see clothed like yourself.

When I first saw the dining room with the piteous line of figures all wearing the badge of shame I shut my teeth hard and said, "This is for love."

I'm only poor and ordinary, but no woman can love better or stronger than I can.

The courage that came to me was all over to myself.

"He'll always love me now, seeing I suffer so much to save him."

Six weary months I ate the prison food.

I was never strong; now I was sickly all the time. When the bread was dry and coarse and when my poor stomach revolted against the weary routine of black coffee and that awful soup, I still had a heart full of love for him that kept me up.

When the hard husk mattress on my poor little iron cot dug into my poor sides until they ached, my consolation was in the memory of my dear husband.

While I was suffering he was free.

Twice I was very ill. Once the prison doctor, a dear, kind man, let me send for Bill. They thought I was dying. The matrons gave me good advice, and said I ought to be thankful to have some one, good as Bill, to love me and to forgive my crime.

I'd smile a grim smile. The secret was mine. Only Bill knew. He was mine, too.

While I lay weak and sick the thought of our little bond made me quite happy.

It was a rest from the hard work in the penitentiary laundry.

I had time to lie and dream of Bill. Dream of how much happier we'd be than any other couple on earth. No other people had such a bond of sympathy.

At last the weary time elapsed. I went out in the sunshine again. The light made me blind. Bill met me, and I was as happy as mortal could be.

Now we'll begin all over. I kept saying to myself.

Sometimes I feared some other girl had stolen him from me. Then I was jealous.

But he seemed kind and loving, and so I thought I was mistaken. We tried awfully hard to get along, but somehow we couldn't. Then I went out to service again. Whenever it was pay day Bill was at the door, waiting to get every dollar of the little money I earned. I always gave him all I had. All I cared for was to keep him from saloons and bad company.

After a little I began suspecting he gave the money I worked so hard to get to younger, prettier women. I was getting worn-looking, weaker and more helpless all the time he was getting more angry when the little money wasn't enough to please him. Pretty soon he began to abuse me. When there was no other way he'd draw off and give me a brutal blow on my poor chest. I could endure it no longer—my heart was aching all the time fit to break.

There was no pleasing him. He always found fault. Finally I'd lose place after place because the ladies I lived with wouldn't have him around.

I was near down sick—almost ready to go to Bellevue when the lady I am with now took me in. Her name is Mrs. Kellar. She lives at No. 243 West Fifteenth street. Bill kept coming here every pay day. My mistress was beginning to get tired. She said I was a fool to work so hard and give a man every cent. So I had to wear clothes people gave me rather than go naked.

One day we walked on Seventh avenue together. I carrying the market basket, she walking by the side of me. Bill came up and said:

"Got any money?" "No," I said, "not for you. You've had the last cent." Then he drew away and out with his arm and hit me.

He struck me again till I nearly cried out with pain.

I nearly fainted and my mistress helped me home.

"Well, you get rid of him," she said, "and get him on the island, or want you?" "Well, I'm not sure," I said. "Then you'll leave me," she answered.

"I'll do it," I said.

The next day I went to the court.

The Judge gave me a summons and I appeared against him and told the police everything.

There's nothing more to say. But there's the whole truth now.

Look at me. Do I look like anything but a hard working drudge? There's all there is to it. I loved him and he drove me too far. I can hardly walk these last days, I'm that weak and sick. If this goes on, I'll die; that's sure.

But I love Bill. If I had it to do over again I'd do it, for I loved Bill then, and I love him now—and I'll always love him.

IN JAIL—HER SACRIFICE

## Queen Victoria's Youngest Soldier.

THE youngest soldier in the British Army is nine years old, and this is a picture of him in uniform. More over, he is no mere make-believe soldier, for he has been recognized as one of her armed defenders by Queen Victoria herself. His name is Victor McNeil and he is the son of Major-General McNeil of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders.

The Queen has been graciously pleased to accept the photograph of her youngest soldier, and is much interested in the long and distinguished services of his father.



VICTOR McNEIL, OF THE QUEEN'S OWN HIGHLANDERS.